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ל'פנ"ג

SHEKEL



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MEN WOMEN CHILDREN MASSES FOR THE GAS CHAMBERS, ADVANCING TOWARDS
HORROR BENEATH THE WHIP OF THE EXECUTIONER. YOUR SAD HOLOCAUST IS
ENGRAVED IN HISTORY AND NOTHING SHALL PURGE YOUR DEATH FROM OUR
MEMORY. FOR OUR MEMORIES ARE YOUR ONLY GRAVE....

OUR ORGANIZATION

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The Association sponsors major cultural/social/numismatic events such as national and regional conventions, study tours to Israel, publication of books, and other activities which will be of benefit to the members. Local chapters exist in many areas. Write for further information.

The Association publishes the SHEKEL six times a year. It is a journal and news magazine prepared for the enlightenment and education of the membership and neither solicits nor accepts advertising. All articles published are the views and opinions of the authors and may or may not reflect the views and opinions of A.I.N.A.

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Table of Contents

President's Message	
by Moe Weinschel.....	2
Jewish History in Venice	
by Edward Schuman.....	3
NIS 10 New Israel Coin	
by Shmuel Bilitzki.....	8
Celebration of Lag B'Omer	
by Gabe Levenson.....	9
A Star is Born	
by Jacob Stein.....	12
Oscar Schindler Medal	
by Mel Wacks.....	16
Albert Einstein - Madi Gras Doubloons	
by Harry Flower.....	18
Israel's Money & Medals - Update #12	
by Dr. Gary P. Laroff.....	20
The Secret Jews of Belmonte	
by Seth Citell.....	29
The Aleph Beth Page	
by Edward Janis.....	32
25 Mils - The First Coin of Israel	
by Shmuel Aviezer.....	33
August Belmont & Co.	
by Edward Schuman.....	36
Who's Who in Israeli Banknotes	
by Shmuel Aviezer.....	38
Genocide as German Government Policy	
Before the Holocaust	
by Peter S. Horvitz.....	40
Mike, You are Not My Great-Grand Daddy	
by George Prager.....	43
A.I.N.A. Club Bulletin	
by Donna J. Sims.....	45
Shekel Membership Application.....	47

The President's Message *by Moe Weinschel*



Dear Members:

The annual membership meeting was held on May 4 at the Sheraton New York Towers, during the N.Y. International Convention. The Directors and members plus more than 280 proxies constituted a quorum, so that we were able to conduct the meeting.

A report on the state of AINA was made. AINA is holding its own financially since we instituted economies. The main problem confronting us is membership. We must make a stronger effort to replace members lost by attrition and drop out. We welcomed new Director Harry Pollackov, who will work on membership and publicity. We were given table space at the Convention, met with many members and made new friends for AINA. The table was manned by Vice President Ed Janis, Harry and Jean Pollackov and myself. Four new members joined and we hope that more will come through the Shekels and other PR material that was distributed.

AINA will attend the (ANA) American Numismatic Association annual convention in Anaheim, CA in August, and will be at the Israel Govt. Coins & Medals space on the "Mint Mile" location. An "Israel Day" is planned for Aug. 17, with a special meeting that afternoon for all AINA and IGCNC membership subscribers. Watch for further news of time and location.

Since we cannot always coincide mailing our order forms with those of IGCNC, we ask our members to continue placing orders for new issues by using the IGCNC form (or our form) and sending it to AINA New Issues Dept., Box 836, Oakland Gardens, NY 11364. Mark AINA and/or your INS club on the form so that proper credit can be given. AINA and the clubs benefit and the price to you is the same.

PLEASE NOTE

AINA IS A NON - PROFIT 501C TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATION. DONATIONS ARE FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE. PLEASE REMEMBER A DONATION TO AINA WHEN YOU PAY YOUR DUES, AND/OR IF YOU SET UP A LEGACY, THUS GIVING AINA THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE TO BE THE VIBRANT VOICE OF ISRAEL NUMISMATICS AND MAINTAIN OUR GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAST.

Shalom, *Moe.*

Jewish History in Venice by Edward Schuman

The first Venetian document in which Jews are mentioned is a decree of the Senate dated 945 prohibiting captains of ships from taking on board Jews or other merchants as a protectionist measure for Venetians. In a census taken in 1152, Jews in the city numbered 1200. In the early part of the 13th century many Jews came to Venice from Germany, some seeking refuge from persecution, others attracted by the commercial advantages of this important seaport. Besides conducting business, Jews operated loan banks. In the ancient decrees of the Senate in regards to Jews, it is repeatedly declared that the operation of these banks, which was prohibited by canonical law for them, was the chief reason for admitting Jews into Venice.

Dispite the important role Jews played in the Venetian economy, their rights to stay in Venice always remained precarious. Their legal position was not regulated by law. The expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 and Portugal in 1496 brought many exiles to Venice. In the second half of the 15th century, the Jews of the entire republic were menaced by the clerical agitation against Jewish money-lenders and some cities on the mainland requested and received permission from the senate to expell the Jews. In Venice, to insure the separation of Jews and Christians, the institution of the Ghetto was introduced.

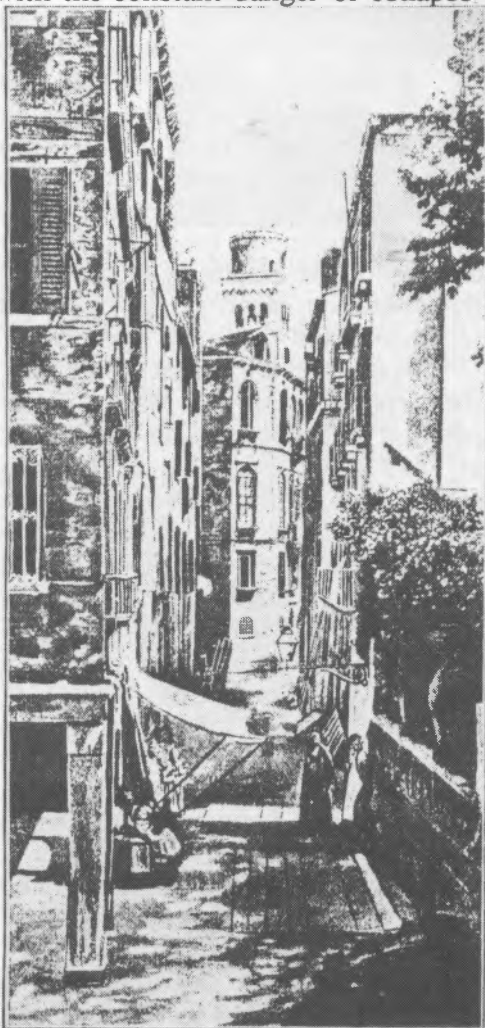
Venice is the only one among the great Jewish communities of the past to possess the old Ghetto almost unchanged. Jews lived their troubled life here for centuries closed within a particular world, with their worship, their traditions, their schools; almost a little state to itself. Gathered around the five major synagogues, which had a definite social function, with their rabbis and their institutions, they dedicated themselves to various trades: Tailors, shoemakers, hawkers were the poorest and money-lenders or ships' outfitters, the richest.

They could circulate freely in the city during the day, but at sunset, they all went into the Ghetto. During the night, the guards, paid by the Jews themselves, watched over the entrances and the canals. Trumpet blasts in the morning, except on Sabbath and Holidays announced that it was the hour of Shacharit in the synagogue. Everyone had his own habitual place. Apart from the prayers, they listened to the rabbis' sermons on biblical topics or questions of the day. It was not rare that non-Jewish friars and learned folk also attended.

Afterwards each went to his own job, the whole day there being a continuous animation in the streets, chatting and often gossip in the typical jargon, made up of Venetian, Spanish and Italian elements mixed with Jewish expressions. It was a little world, with its typical figures, where everybody knew everything about everyone. There were little disputes, malicious comments, little personal jealousies. but where basically they were all united, linked by a common destiny and content with their status.

When the gates of the Ghetto were closed in the evening, and the guards checked the entrances, all returned to their own homes, tiny and insufficient to hold a huge population, built upwards for lack of space, leaning one against another with the constant danger of collapse of fires and of the diffusion of epidemics. This was the life of the Ghetto Jews, and although forced to wear the yellow sign, obliged to pay heavy tributes, without being able to enjoy the most elementary rights enjoyed by the rest of the population, and without being able to follow noble professions or arts, they could nevertheless live for centuries, sheltered from most violence and aggression such as happened in other cities. They lived in positive harmony with the Venetians, who were never openly hostile.

The Ghetto stands at the juncture point of three parishes. The Old Ghetto, which dates from 1541, belongs to Saint Geremia, the New Ghetto, which was the first the Jews entered in 1516, to Saint Gerolamo and the Newest Ghetto, added in 1633 to the present-day Saint Alvise. Before the Jews were confined there, this land was the "ghetto", that is to say called so because the foundry for the mortars of the Republic were constructed there and used until the 14th century. The word Ghetto literally means metal works or foundry, and since this was the



The Ghetto, Venice.

first restricted residence Jews were permitted to reside in, the word Ghetto became synonymous for all restricted places of Jewish inhabitant. The area was at that time abandoned and was a closed area from which, across a bridge over a canal, and through a door, one arrived in a sector where the decades of debris of the furnaces was accumulated. The Jews occupied this area in three days, taking over the existing houses and quickly adapting them to their own needs.

Still to-day one arrives at the Old Ghetto from the Fondamenta di Cannaregio, through a portico: on the sides of it are still to be seen the signs of the gates which were closed up at night, and the two little

windows, now walled up, from which watched the guards. It is entered through a long alley which receives very little sunlight (Calle di Ghetto Vecchio). On either side are typical tall houses which seem to choke it. In spite of many restorations, it preserves its old atmosphere.

A tablet to the left a little beyond the portico, today barely legible, recalls that it was forbidden to swear, forbidden for any converted Jew to associate with the Ghetto and it indicates the possible penalties and the reward for every accusation (1704).

The synagogues, Sephardic, Ashkenazi and Levantine were built on the top floors of the standing buildings. The reasons being two fold. The first as not to call attention to the Jewish Houses of Worship, and the second being in the belief that the higher one prayed, the closer to the Almighty they became..

The largest of the Venetian synagogues is the Sephardic and perhaps the only one in the world to have functioned uninterruptedly from its foundation until the present day. Built in the second half of the 16th century (1555 or 1584) by the Spaniards and possibly by forced converts landed in Venice, it underwent extensive restoration in 1635 which an undocumented tradition attributes to Baldassare Longhena, the great Venetian architect, and later, towards the end of the 19th century. It did not lose its characteristics of solemn imposing simplicity. A separate building, it is barely noticeable from the outside, as was the custom, where only the huge, symmetrically arranged, arched windows distinguish it from a common dwelling. On the facade now, however, is a tablet in memory of the two hundred Venetian Jews deported to Nazi extermination camps during the last war. The entrance is on the long side, through a large wooden portal finely decorated with geometric elements in high relief, very similar in its classical composition to the portal of the Levantine School. On the arch is the following inscription: *"Blessed are they who live in Thy house, who praise Thee unceasingly."*

Before World War II more than 800 Jewish families lived in the Ghetto. There are only eight Jewish families left today. The present day inhabitants of these historic dwellings are mostly artists or Asian immigrant families who appear to have adapted to the low ceilings and cramped quarters.

My wife Florence and myself were on a tour of Italy in May. The morning we spent at this oldest ghetto and the synagogues certainly was one of the high lights of our trip and should not be missed by any tourist visiting Italy.


In the Ghetto square, mounted on an ancient faded red brick wall are five magnificent medallic cast bronze plaques, by Blatak, picturing scenes under the Nazi occupation of Venice. They describe in detail the horrors that the Jewish community were subjected to. The English version of the explanatory bronze memorial tablet, proclaimed in five languages, is reproduced on the front cover of this SHEKEL..



At the Venetian Hebraica Office, our inquiry if the community ever issued a medal in commemoration of an event or anniversary, or of any fiscal documents of the synagogue or Jewish community existed were fruitless. It was then that we asked if receipts were given for donations. Upon the affirmative, a donation was made to the Comunita' Ebraica Di Venezia on behalf of AINA. This is the primary numismatic connection for the article. The group of undated coins, issued by various "Doges" of Venice were current coins used during the early centuries of the ghetto. They are called Soldi and were valued at 12 Denari. As our photographs of the medallic sculptures came out exceptionally well, these are also reproduced.


COMUNITA'
EBRAICA
DI VENEZIA

N. 69
Venezia, 08.05.1995

C.S. 146



(in cifre)

Ricevo dal Sig. American Israel Numismatic Association

Lire 1000


(in lettere)

Donation



Il Segretario



Obv. leg: S.M.V. PAVL. RAIN.



Obv. leg: S.M.V.M. FOSCARENVS.



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NIS 10 – New Israel Shekel Coin by Shmuel Bilitzki

On February 7, 1995, the Bank of Israel placed into circulation a new coin in the denomination of NIS 10, which will replace the existing banknote of the same value, bearing the portrait of Golda Meir.

Some 16 million notes of the Golda Meir notes now in circulation will continue to be legal tender, but will be gradually withdrawn and replaced by coins.

The decision on the issue of the coin, as well as on its features, was made following a public opinion poll. The coin will be the first bi-colored one in Israel, with an outer ring of Nickel Bonded Steel and a center of Aureate Bonded Bronze.

Diameter: Ring 23mm, center 16 mm

Weight: 7 gram

Edge: reeded:

Thickness: 2.2 mm

Alloy: Ring: nickel bonded steel

Center: Aureate Bonded bronze



Theme side: Palm tree with seven leaves and two baskets with dates; the emblem of the State of Israel; the words "for the redemption of Zion" in ancient and modern Hebrew; vertical lines. The design source is an ancient coin from 69 AD, the fourth year of the Jewish-Roman war, one year before the destruction of the Second Temple.

Value side: The denomination "10 New Sheqalim" and "Israel" in Hebrew, Arabic, and English; the date in Hebrew; branch with dates; vertical lines.

Design: Reuven Nutels Arabic Inscriptions Joseph Nutels

Cost savings has been cited as a factor in the recent decision in Israel to immediately replace the circulating 10-New Sheqalim note with a coin of the same denomination. The note in circulation since 1985 is orange, gold and multicolored with a vignette of Golda Meir at right and a stylized tree intertwined with Star of David at the center on the face. The back depicts a gathering in front of the Moscow synagogue in Russia. It is the lowest denomination note currently used in Israel today. It has a value of about \$3.30 U.S.

The Bank of Israel began introducing about 20 million of the new bi-metal coins into circulation.. Plans call for a withdrawal of all estimated 17 million of the old notes from circulation within a year.

Before we put out any bill or coins, we make surveys. We found that 70 percent were in favor of this switch, especially when they heard about the large savings involved."

Israeli notes to remain in circulation are in denominations of 20, 50, 100 and 200 new sheqalim. Coins currently used in circulation are in denominations of 5 and 10 agorot and half, 1 and 5 sheqalim.

Month of Iyar Brings Celebration of Lag B'Omer to Djerba

by Gabe Levenson

O, Geoffrey Chaucer, thou shouldst be living at this hour to narrate the account of the pilgrimage of Jews to the island of Djerba as you did your own pilgrimage to Canterbury. If Chaucer were to begin this tale, he might begin like this:

When that Iyar, with its sweet showers,
The desert drought hath pierced with tropic flowers
And bathed the synagogue with gentle rain--
Then's time for Lag B'Omer once again.
The 18th Iyar is the sacred date
When pilgrims, Djerba bound, will celebrate
Shimeon bar Yochai's anniversary.
At Ghriba, will this goodly company
Light up their candles, bend their knees and pray
In tribute to the tzadik on his day.

On the 18th of Iyar, the 18th of May this year, by the Gregorian calendar - hundreds of Jews from Jerusalem, Montreal, Marseilles, Paris and other cities of the Diaspora will gather at the ancient Ghriba synagogue in the remote village of Hara Sghira on this island off the southern coast of Tunisia.

This day is unlike any other in the Djerban year. It is the final and most festive day of the annual pilgrimage in honor of Shimeon bar Yochai, the revered "saint" of Djerban Jewry, celebrated as the author of the Zohar, the sacred book of Kabbalism. He is also as one of the five pupils of Rabbi Akiva who survived the failed Bar Kochba rebellion and kept up the study of Torah in Eretz Yisrael, despite the threat of a Roman death sentence.

In Israel, Lag B'Omer is celebrated as a minor holiday, marked though it is with a recess from school, the lighting of bonfires throughout the country and the traditional first haircut of three-year old boys at the village of Meron.

In Djerba, Lag B'Omer is a major holiday, almost an entire week of prayer and pageantry, beginning on the 14th of Iyar, a month after Passover, and continuing to the 18th, the anniversary of Bar Yochai's death.

Ghriba is both shuk and synagogue on this occasion. The building in its huge courtyard serves as a kind of caravanserai, housing pilgrims and providing the market place for the sale of roast lamb and fried briks, fruits and alcoholic beverages, books and clothing and trinkets the visitors can bring home to family and friends. Both Jewish and Muslim merchants will participate in the lively auction for the most favorable positions for their stalls. Beggars from as far away

as Tunis, 300 miles to the north, will descend upon Ghriba, sure of collecting enough dinars to pay for the cost of their journey. The pilgrims themselves have a more pious mission. As described in *The Last Arab Jews*, a study of the Jews of Djerba by Abraham L. Udovich and Lucette Valensi, they enter the outer hall of Ghriba, remove their shoes, cover their heads and proceed to the inner sanctuary. There, the pilgrims offer their contributions to a member of the Ghriba committee installed in the synagogue for the duration of the holiday. The pilgrims will get receipts both for their own contributions and those made by friends or relatives back home who want at least the glory of secondhand participation in the Lag B'Omer celebration.

The first hand celebrants, carrying lighted candles, will make a circuit of the sanctuary, pausing at the hechel, the Holy Ark, to kiss the Torah and to place raw eggs in a candle-illuminated alcove at the foot of the ark. The shell of each egg is inscribed with the name of an unmarried but eligible Djerban woman.

On the final day of the ceremony, each pilgrim will retrieve his or her egg, which has now been baked by the combined heat of the candles, and present it to the designated maiden. She, in turn, will eat the egg, confident that, before the next Lag B'Omer, she will have found a husband or, in the Djerban tradition - which has prevailed for centuries - will have had a husband "arranged" for her.

The 18th of Iyar is also the time for the grand procession, which is the very climax of the whole festival. It is then that the menara will have been bedecked, wrapped and hidden in layers of silk and muslin scarves which, together with silver rimonim (pomegranates) attached to the top of the revered candelabrum, will be the object of loud and lively bidding. During the auction, an orchestra will play traditional melodies interspersed, in the present decade, with rock and roll. In the galleries, above the crowded courtyard, the women of the Djerba Jewish community will make their appearance, laden with jewelry, wearing their finest silks and, after each transaction, "ululating" (in the words of the authors Udovich and Valensi) to the beat of the orchestra and "generally sprinkling both the menara and the assembled pilgrims standing around it with scented water, while the-auctioneers down glasses filled to the brim with spirits."

After the bid for the last scarf has been made, the menara will be carried in a slow procession from the synagogue to the center of Hara Sghira. Again there will be spirited auctioneering, this time for the privilege of wheeling the sacred object for a yard or two. With frequent stops for each new bidder, the march of no more than half a mile will take hours. Hara Sghira finally achieved, the procession will halt for a brief prayer service at each synagogue in the village and then return to Ghriba. The menara candles will be lit; the paraders will nibble fresh fruits, almonds and sunflower seeds and pour themselves generous drinks.

Lag B'Omer is the one time of the year when the usual barriers are taken down. Women, who otherwise can never enter the synagogue except to clean it, are permitted to join the pilgrimage, light candles, deposit the raw eggs and retrieve the baked ones. Muslims also join in the procession and in the caravanserai hustle-bustle, song-and-dance and general revelry.

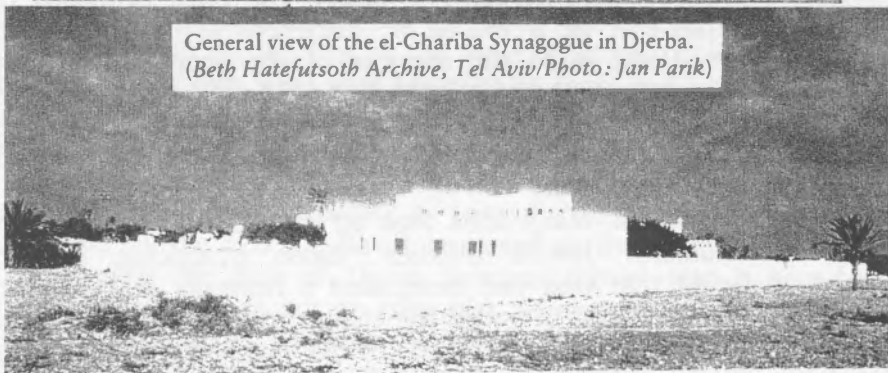
By nightfall of the 18th, the menara will have been put back in its storage bin for another year and the multitude of pilgrims will have begun their journeys home, amply filled with food, drink and memories. Medieval Christianity had its pilgrimage to Canterbury; Islam has its haj to Mecca; no less an event is the yearly Jewish mission to Djerba.

The author of this fascinating article, Gabe Levenson, is the originator of "The Jewish Traveler", a syndicated column carried by many Jewish newspapers throughout the country. Mr. Levenson has researched hundreds of instances of Jewish life and history in far off parts of the world which have been published under his "Jewish Traveler" by-line. This article appeared in the Metro-West Jewish News.

The numismatic illustration is the Lag B'Omer medal issued by The Israel Government Coins & Medals Corporation in 1994 as part of their "Jewish Holidays" series. It depicts the light of the Kaballa and the teachings of Rabbi Simeon Bar Yochi.



General view of the el-Ghariba Synagogue in Djerba.
(Beth Hatefutsoth Archive, Tel Aviv/Photo: Jan Parik)



A Star is Born - From Hexagram to Magen David
by Jacob Stein
from the Long Island Jewish World
Illustrated with I.G.C.M.C. Medals

It was an interesting idea. Take two equilateral triangles, place one on the other - the point of one going up, the other going down - and we create a Star of David, also known as the Shield of David. We have created a symbol that today is universally recognized as the symbol of Jews, of Judaism and of the State of Israel.

Anthropologists claim that the triangle pointing downwards represents female sexuality, while the triangle pointing upward represents male sexuality. The overlapping of the two triangles, they say, reflects unity and harmony. Others claim that one triangle represents fire, the other water. So the hexagram was used outside a brandy shop to serve as a symbol of the firewater sold within.

The first evidence of the use of the six pointed star is found on the seal of one Joshua ben Asaiah of Sidon, and dates from the 7th century B.C.E. Eight centuries later, the hexagram is found on the wall of a synagogue at Capernaum, as a decorative design, with a swastika next to it.

There is a legend that King Solomon wore a ring with the six pointed star on it, using it to control demons and spirits. Copies of that ring, used as good luck charms, carry the hexagram or the pentagram, a five pointed star frequently referred to as the "Seal of Solomon."

Well, if this is so definitely a star - and we refer to it as the Star of David - why is it referred to as a *Magen David*, the Shield of David? Certain Jewish texts speak of a magical shield that protected King David from his enemies. Various texts are written on this shield; the name of God in 72 letters, an entire psalm (Psalm 67) and the six aspects of the divine spirit in the form of six hexagrams.

We have always been interested in stars. The Lord promised the patriarch Abraham that we would be as "numerous as the stars in the heaven." When Balak hired the services of the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites, he spoke of a "star rising from Jacob." This could be the authority used to recognize Bar Koseva, the leader of the 135 B.C.E. revolt against the Romans, as the messiah, and to rename him Bar Kochba, son of the star.

In the ancient world, many Jews took up the study of the stars and became astronomers. Jewish mystics, those practicing practical kabbalah, believed that God had designated a heavenly star for each person, and that each star is under the charge of an angel. Therefore, the destiny of each man is in the hands of his angel. These angels are the representatives and defenders of their charge before the heavenly court.

A concern with stars is evident in Jewish life today. I don't believe my grandfather was a kabbalist, practical or otherwise, but I do remember how he watched for three stars in the evening sky that would tell him that Shabbat was over and it was time for him to say *havdalah* and open his store for business.

When we customarily wish each other *mazel tov*, assuming it means good luck, we are relating to the stars again, as the word *mazala* means "constellation".

There is very little evidence of the hexagram having a Jewish relationship until 1354 when Emperor Charles IV of Prague permitted the Jews of Prague to display their flag on state occasions. The flag featured a large six-pointed star in the center. The use of the six pointed star as a symbol of the Jewish community spread throughout Europe. When a symbol dividing the Jewish community of Vienna from the Christian community was necessary, a large stone, with a cross and a six pointed star of equal size chiseled on each face, was placed at the border between the two communities.

Christian churches of the early Middle Ages displayed a hexagram as a design feature, but there is no evidence that it was used in synagogues or in Jewish ritual activities. The Arabs, in their secular and religious activities made frequent use of the hexagram as a decorative device.

The French revolution brought the Jewish communities of Europe emancipation and citizenship. A symbol was necessary for the representation of the Jewish community, similar to the cross of the Christian community which they saw everywhere before them. The six pointed star was selected.

Theodor Herzl chose the Star of David as his symbol of the Zionist movement, because it represented the Jewish community in the most universal way, and because there was very little religious symbolism to the star which could cause difficulties for Herzl with various Jewish sects. The first issue of his movement's publication *Die Welt*, which appeared in June, 1897, carried the Star of David on its masthead.

Today we see the *Magen David* on the tail of an El Al airliner, on the rings and necklaces and amulets we wear, in synagogue architecture and on the flag of the State of Israel. It is a symbol that brings to mind our 5000 year history, its tears and its smiles, as well as the haunting recall that the Star of David, yellow in color, had to be worn by every Jew during the hateful Hitler years.

Quite frequently, the Star of David has been incorporated into the motif of Israel State Medals. A few of these medals, with unique depictions of the Star of David are used to illustrate this article. In some medals the Star of David becomes woven into a part of the intricate design. It is not an easy task to create a medal. One has to reflect the thoughts which must travel through the minds of these gifted artists who are the creators and designers for the remarkable series of Israel State Medals.

Mordechai Bar Katz creates a figures 10, marking the number of decades of Jewish resettlement in Samaria. The Star of David is superimposed over the O in the number 10



Designer Ruben Nutels, in the B'nai B'rith Convention Award Medal 1987, incorporated the symbol of the centenary celebration within the Star of David.



Jewish Agency State Medal 1979 designed by Ya'akov Anidi. The designer portrays a fractional reproduction of the Star of David in the form of immigrants disembarking from a ship, completing the Star of David.



The Absorption Award Medal 1975. Designer Eliezer Weishoff creates a flower in the form of a Star of David. In place of stamens, a seven branch candelabra. "I will plant them upon their land (and they shall not forsake it again)" Amos 15:15



"At the beginning of the New Year 5665 (1904), 90 years ago, the blue and white "Zionist-Jewish" flag flew for the first time side by side with the flags of all the nations at the World's Fair in St. Louis. "Alongside the banner of Zion, the flags of other nations were more brilliant," read an editorial from the *Yiddish Tageblatt* newspaper. It is a modest blue and white with a six corner star in the center, but it means more to civilization , means more to humanity than many other of the flaunting banners which have been crowded a bit to make room for this newcomer," the paper wrote."

This opening paragraph of "The Zionist Flag at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition", authored by Rabbi David Geffon appeared in The SHEKEL, Volume XXVII No. 6 -November-December 1994.

Through the generosity of Mr. Dan Kyran, the Consulate General of Israel in Boston, a photograph of a stereoptical slide (#46), taken from the Tower of Electricity Building N.E. over Basin and Plaza to Manufacturers Building, at the World's Fair, St. Louis, is shown.

Stereoptical slides were a very popular at this time, and are highly collectibles today. Two identical photographic images were placed side by side in a frame, which when placed in a holder and viewed through double lenses, create the appearance of true three dimensional viewing.



(46) From tower of Electricity Bldg. N.E. over Basin and Plaza to Manufacturers Bldg., World's Fair St. Louis, U.S.A. Copyright 1904 by Underwood & Underwood.

OSKAR SCHINDLER MEDAL RAISES FUNDS TO DOCUMENT HOLOCAUST RESCUERS by Mel Wacks, N.L.G.

Millions of people who have read or seen the inspiring story of Schindler's List can now join in a tribute to this hero. The new limited edition metallic sculpture of Oskar Schindler uses imagery inspired by the miraculous exodus of the ancient Israelites from bondage in Egypt.

When families around the world celebrate the first nights of Passover (April 14th and 15th), they will read how the Jews, who "were slaves unto Pharaoh of Egypt," were rescued by God, who "brought them forth with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." So too, this dramatic work of art shows a mighty hand and outstretched arm separating masses of people from chaos, to symbolize the rescue by Oskar Schindler of 1,300 Jews from almost certain extermination.

The obverse of this large 4" medal features a high relief portrait of Oskar Schindler, a Roman Catholic German industrialist, who died in 1974 and was buried in Jerusalem in keeping with his last will and testament. The Schindler medal was created by award-winning artist Marika Somogyi, whose previous sculptured works include tributes to Holocaust hero Raoul Wallenberg and the victims of Kristallnacht. Somogyi has the distinction of having designed a United States coin - the 1991 Mount Rushmore Silver Dollar.

Not more than 250 Oskar Schindler commemorative medals will be cast in 2 pounds of bronze using the ancient lost-wax method. Every piece is hand finished by Ms. Somogyi, who then personally engraves her initials and the serial number on the edge.

The Schindler medal is available for a \$150 contribution to the non-profit Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705. Add \$5 per order for shipping and handling. Because of the very limited quantity, orders will be filled on a strict first come - first served basis, with the earliest orders receiving the lowest serial numbers. Please allow up to 90 days for delivery. For further information contact Mel Wacks at (818) 225-1348.

A portion of the sale proceeds will help support the Institute of Righteous Acts, a division of the Magnes Museum, which seeks to study the altruistic behavior of hundreds of courageous non-Jewish men and women who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.



Albert Einstein and the Madi Gras Doubloons

by Harry Flower

I have been collecting and researching the medals, tokens and coins that portray or have reference to Albert Einstein for over 20 years. My first Einstein Medal was produced by artist Maarten Pauw of Schoonhoven, Netherlands. This medal was obtained from Numismatic Dealer Jacques Schulman of Amsterdam, May 1974. Since that time, I have obtained Einstein items from medalists, mints, coin dealers and collectors from Australia, Belgium, France, Germany (both East and West), Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Switzerland, and Thailand. Most, of course, obtained here in this country.

The purpose of issue of these numismatic items varied. Many were issued to commemorate Einstein's birthday (March 14, 1879), to mark the anniversary of his death (April 18, 1955) or just to pay tribute to a great humanitarian and scientist. Some Einstein medals were issued as part of a set of Scientists of the World or a set of Great Americans or a set of prominent Jews of the World.

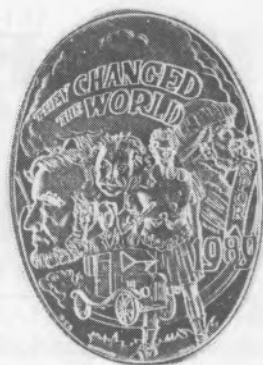
In 1989 for the first time, there was an issue that had for its purpose of issue, five world-renowned people that "changed the world". Among these famous people was Albert Einstein. The issue was an aluminum token set of 5 Mardi Gras Medals known as "doubloons".

The modern series of New Orleans Mardi Gras doubloons began in 1960. Soon these light-weight aluminum doubloons became popular and were named "throws". The pieces were thrown to spectators from the floats of the parades. In addition to the throws, some parade organizations called "krewes", issued the same design on other metals such as silver and bronze. These were for presentations and for collectors.

In 1967 the Krewe of Endymion was organized as a Parade Group. In Greek mythology Endymion is a beautiful youth, consequently, these doubloons are known as "Tokens of Youths". Each year a prominent person in his field was honored; in 1967 it was Babe Ruth; in 1968 Clark Gable was honored; in 1969 Benny Goodman was selected;...skipping to 1989, the theme adored was "THEY CHANGED THE WORLD" and the people honored were Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, Julius Caesar and Marco Polo.

OBVERSE: This side of the token features the emblem of the krewe: in the center is a Fleur-de-lis surrounded by an ornate design; the krewe's name "ENDYMION" above at the rim; the date 1967 (year club was founded) below. At the bottom in two lines is "TOKEN OF YOUTH" and "NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS".

REVERSE: Curved in two lines near the top is "THEY CHANGED THE WORLD".. Most of this side is a portrait montage of Abraham



Lincoln, Albert Einstein, on the left and center; the tiny face of Henry Ford beneath, and his Model T car), Julius Caesar (and a standard with the letters "SPQR") and Marco Polo. At 4:00 o'clock in large numerals is the date "1989"; at 8:00 o'clock are the tiny letters "BKA", the initials of the designer firm.

SPECIFICATIONS & MINTAGE (Aluminum issues)

1. Aluminum, natural	39mm	4.39gm	510,000
2. Aluminum, turquoise	39mm	4.47gm	450,000
3. Aluminum, gold	39mm	4.47gm	80,000
4. Aluminum, purple	39mm	4.47gm	80,000
5. Aluminum, blue	39mm	4.47gm	80,000

(All 5 aluminum varieties: reeded edges)

SPECIFICATIONS & MINTAGE (Bronze & silver issues)

1. Bronze, antique	34x47mm	29.60gm	2,000
2. Bronze, enameled	34x47mm	32.54gm	2,500
3. Silver, 1000 fine	34x47mm	27.84gm	800

(All bronze & silver varieties: plain edges)

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION: The design of the 1989 Endymion issues was by artists of the firm of Blaine Kern Artists Inc. of New Orleans, Louisiana. This firm arranged for the striking of the round aluminum doubloons by U.S. firms; the oval bronze and silver pieces were produced by a West German firm. The pieces were only available through the organization, Krewe of Endymion.

At this time this collector has over 100 different types of Einstein coins, medals and tokens in his collection; this number expands to 145 varieties. In this large collection the above Mardi Gras issue is one of the most interesting. The contributions of Abraham Lincoln, Henry Ford, Julius Caesar and Marco Polo are renowned; Albert Einstein is probably the most celebrated scientist the world has ever known.

ISRAEL'S Money & Medals UPDATE

by Dr. Gary P. Laroff

Update #12: Commissioned Medals 1987 - 1993

This update to *Israel's Money and Medals* provides the first update to the Commissioned Medals since the book was published in 1988. The following pages continue where the book left off on page CM-136 with the 1987 "Misgav Ladach Hospital Inauguration" issue, CM-136. The following pages, when removed or photocopied and inserted in the book after page CM-136, bring the commissioned medals largely up to date through page CM-144 and the 1993 "14th Maccabiah Medal" issue, number CM-149.

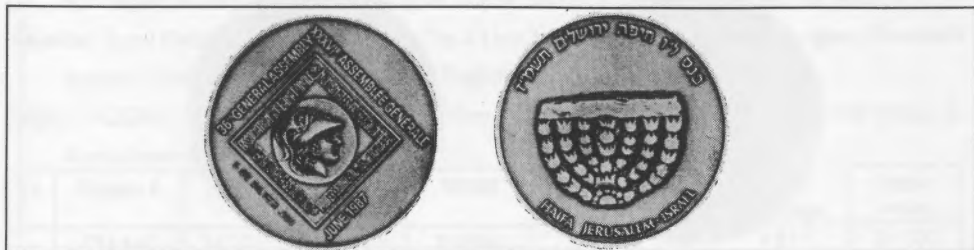
The commissioned medals are some of the most difficult issues to keep track of, to catalog and to write-up. The IGCNC is often officially and privately commissioned to strike medals for ceremonial distribution on many occasions. Some of the medals have been made available for distribution to collectors. In many instances, though, the medals are not available from the corporation and can only be acquired from the commissioning agency or on the open market when a medal appears for sale by the recipient of the presentation medal.

Mintage figures can not always be given accurately, for some medals are struck upon demand by the agency as they are required. An issue price cannot be given for those medals not available from the Corporation; at best only a market value at the time of publication can be estimated. Many of the commissioned medals are quite scarce with some editions being of the highest rarity scale. Some of the medals will appear to be numbered out of chronological order. Since preliminary numbering of the medals has been shared with others for the past seven years we are choosing to not renumber medals in an effort to keep collector's check lists from becoming obsolete.

Israel's Money and Medals Updates are researched and written by Dr. Gary P. Laroff, who is working closely with Sylvia H. Magnus on this effort. The current method of providing eight pages in the center of *The Shekel* makes them easily removed. The copyright to the book *Israel's Money and Medals* is held by Arnold H. Kagan. The format, content and tables in *Israel's Money and Medals Updates* are copyright © 1995 Gary P. Laroff.

Correspondence on this column should be addressed to the author: Dr. Gary P. Laroff, P. O. Box 39, Tualatin, OR 97062-0039.

I.A.P.N. 36th Assembly Medal, CM-137



The International Association of Professional Numismatists (I.A.P.N.) is a non-profit organization composed of commercial firms from all over the world, having as its object the coordination of all efforts, ideas and activities to promote a healthy numismatic market conducted according to the highest standards of business ethics and commercial practice. Founded in Geneva in 1951, this medal commemorates the 36th General Assembly in Jerusalem in June of 1987. This was the first time in Israeli numismatic history, that a pure silver medal of 65 mm. diameter was minted.

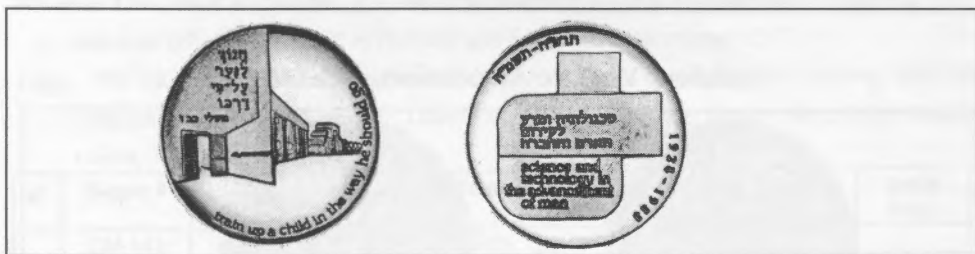
Obverse: I.A.P.N. Emblem; The words, "36th General Assembly, June 1987" in English and French and "50z Silver .999"

Reverse: Stone-relief seven-branched candelabrum found in a 2nd century CE Synagogue in Tiberias with branches composed of stylized pomegranates. The words "Haifa Jerusalem Israel" in Hebrew and English.

Edge: "IGCMC", Silver 999 and serial number; Designer: Lili Sheer; Engraver: Tidhar Dagan Mint; Moshe Hecht, Tel-Aviv.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-137	2610-8656	1987	Ag/999	65	155	<1,000	

"AMAL" Network — 60 Years, CM-138



"AMAL" is Israel's system of technical colleges, comprehensive and vocational high schools, apprenticeship schools, technological education in kibbutzim and moshavim, and adult training centers. The medal honors their sixty years of activity.

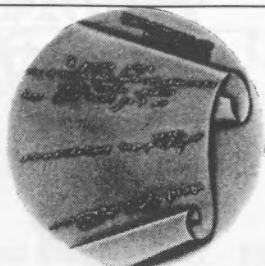
Obverse: Main headquarters of AMAL. "Train up a child in the way he should go," (Proverbs 22:6) in Hebrew and English.

Reverse: AMAL emblem; in English and Hebrew: "Science and Technology in the Advancement of Man," "5688-5748," and "1928-1988."

Edge: "IGCMC", Menorah, serial number; "Sterling . 935" in English and "Silver" in Hebrew; Designer: Ya'acov Zim; Engraver and Mint: S. Kretschmer & Sons, Jerusalem.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-138	1611-5596	1989	tombac	59	98	1,428	\$11.00
	CM-138a	2611-5344	1989	Ag/935	34	22	841	\$23.00

B'nai B'rith 100th Anniversary, CM-139



This medal was issued to celebrate the centenary of the Jerusalem Lodge of B'nai B'rith. Their projects include the establishment of the Jerusalem Library which eventually became the National Library of the State of Israel; the settlement of Motza, establishing and encouraging rural settlements of the indigenous population; promoting community relations between the different ethnic groups; establishing the new Jerusalem suburb of Bayit Vegan; being instrumental in the development and propagation of modern Hebrew as a living language; establishing the first Hebrew speaking kindergartens, providing medical care within the Jewish Community framework; lobbying to remove the legal limitations on Jewish immigration, and working to absorb all arriving immigrants. (See SM-3 and CM-1, CM-20 for other issues.)

Obverse: Centenary emblem: Star of David and Menorah. In Hebrew: "100 Jerusalem Lodge - B'nai B'rith in the Land of Israel," and "40 State of Israel." The years "1888-1988" "5648-5748 in English and Hebrew.

Reverse: Part of the Jerusalem Lodge Report, signed by Ephraim Cohen and Eliezer Ben Yehuda (first secretary and father of the Hebrew language), in the form of a scroll.

Edge: "IGCMC" In English and Hebrew and the Menorah. Numerically serialized. Designer: Ruben Nutels; Engraver: Tidhar Dagan; Mint: Moshe Hecht, Tel-Aviv.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-139	1611-0596	1987	tombac	59	98	2,620	\$11.00

Soldiers' Welfare Association, CM-140



The objective of the "Association for the Well-being of Israel's Soldiers" is to concern itself with the welfare of all Israel's soldiers, equally, while paying special attention to the particular needs of the fighting soldiers. The work of the Association is reflected in its vacation centers for soldiers and in the hitch-hiking shelters and kiosks providing snacks, which it has built for them. Special facilities are provided in the field of education. The Association survives on donations and an annual lottery and a one day "Radiothon" calling for donations.

Obverse: Israel Defense Forces emblem: sword and olive branches contrived into an emblem for "Association for the Well-being of Israel's Soldiers." "For the Soldiers of Israel."

Reverse: Israel Defense Forces emblem; "As a Lion O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch tower," (Isaiah 21:8) in Hebrew and English.

Edge: "IGCMC," Menorah and serial number. Designer: Y. Bibas; Engraver and Mint: S. Kretschmer & Sons, Jerusalem.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-140	1610-5591	1987	tombac	59	98	4,511	\$11.00

Ministry of Education - Veteran Employees, CM-141



The Ministry of Education and Culture requested IGCMC to issue a silver medal. This medal was awarded by the Ministry to veteran employees who had worked for 25 years or more.

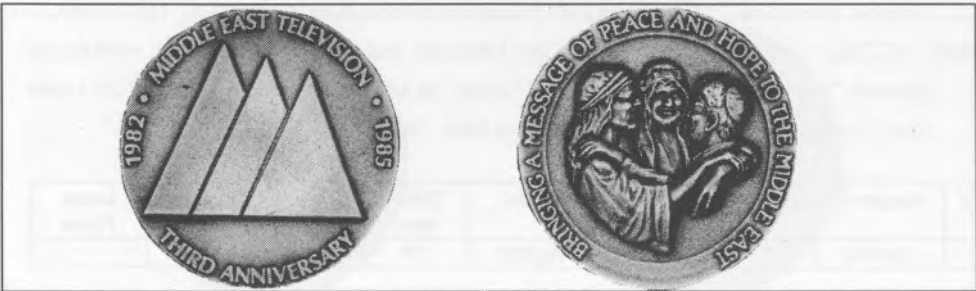
Obverse: Teacher instructing a pupil in front of an open book with passage in Hebrew and English, "The wise of the nation will instruct the people," (Daniel 11:33).

Reverse: Likenesses of students, a lit candle surrounded by "Ask your father to recount it, your elders to tell you the tale," in Hebrew and English (Deuteronomy 32:71).

Edge: "IGCMC" in English and Hebrew and the Menorah. Silver medals: "Sterling .935" in Hebrew and English; Designer: David Ben Hador; Engraver: Moshe Nov; Mint: Moshe Hecht, Tel-Aviv.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-141		1983	Ag/935	34	22		

Christian Broadcasting Network, CM-142



In honor of the Christian Broadcasting Network's three years of operation in the Middle East Television Station, the Israel Government Coins and Medals, Corp., Ltd. issued this medal.

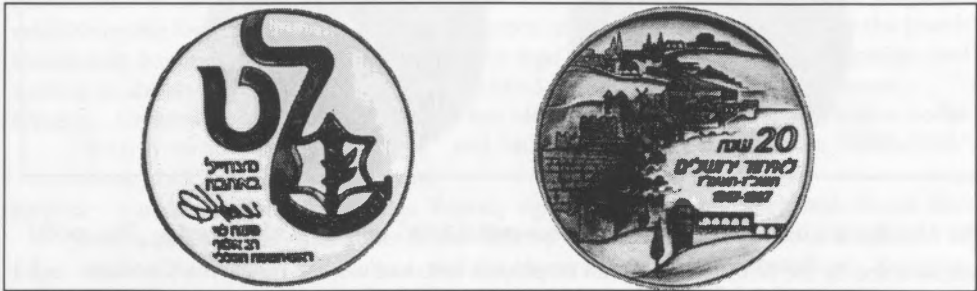
Obverse: Likeness of a broadcasting tower made up of three geometrical figures. "Middle East Television," dates "1982/1985", and "Third Anniversary."

Reverse: Moslem, Christian, and a Jew embracing. "Bringing a message of Peace and Hope to the Middle East."

Edge: "IGCMC" in English and Hebrew, Menorah and serial number; Designer: Christian Broadcasting Network; Engraver: Moshe Nov; Mint: Moshe Hecht, Tel-Aviv.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-142		1985	tombac	59	98	20,000	

Chief of Staff - Award Medal, CM-143



Every year prior to Israel's Independence Day, the Chief of Staff of Israel's Defense Forces, presents a gift to the orphans of the fallen IDF soldiers. The gift, to orphans who have not yet reached the age of 18, represents a message of love and concern. A personalized gift bearing the signature of the Chief of Staff, the design of the medals represents about one thousand words of appreciation and expresses that it represents a gift, not only from the Chief of Staff and the IDF but also from the State of Israel. (See CM-11 and CM-62 for previous issues.)

Obverse: IDF symbol with the Hebrew letters "39" emerging, represeting 39 years of independence of the State of Israel. "From the IDF with love" and the signature of the Chief of Staff, "Rav-Aluf Moshe Levy" both in Hebrew.

Reverse: A stylized panoramic view of Jerusalem as seen on the Knesset medal SM-46 and the Hebrew inscription, "20 Years of the Unification of Jerusalem, 5726-5746, 1967-1987."

Edge: "IGCMC" in English and Hebrew, the Menorah and serial number. The medals are marked "Sterling .935" in Hebrew and "Silver" in English. Designer: Obv: Ruth Lubin Rev: Ya'akov Zim. Mint: The Government Mint, Jerusalem.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-143		1987	Ag/935	37	26	2,410	

Paris and Jerusalem, CM-144



Paris and Jerusalem have a lot in common. Both have a rich, illustrious past. Both have played a major role in the history of the world, both are unique, each with its own unmistakable character and charm. Paris, the city of lights, gives artistic inspiration and freedom of expression. Jerusalem, the city of light and faith, a symbol of spirituality and wisdom. For the people of Israel, Jerusalem has no substitute. Paris is a rebellious city, noted for its intolerance to oppression and injustice, expressed in the uprisings in the city in 1789 and 1968.

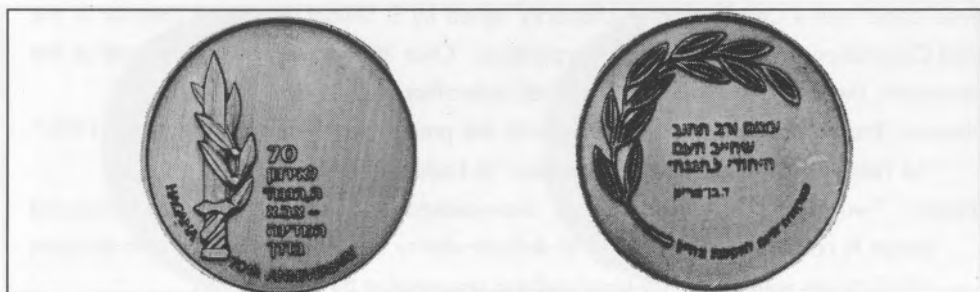
Obverse: Jerusalem Side: Historical and modern landmarks: The Western Wall, the Dome of the Rock, (Mosque of Omar), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Russian Church and the Dormitory Abbey. Also depicted are some recent archaeological excavations, the Burnt House, The Knesset, the Shrine of the Book, and Yad Vashem. The arch was part of the "Churva" Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter. "Jerusalem" in English and Hebrew.

Reverse: "Paris" in English and Hebrew. (Left to right): Arc de Triomphe; Eiffel Tower; the Institut; the Sacre-Coeur; and Notre Dame.

Edge: "IGCMC" in English and Hebrew, the Menorah and serial number. The silver medals are marked, "Silver .999;" the gold medals are marked "Gold 916.6;" Designer: Jerusalem: Nathan Karp; Paris: Jean-Paul Luthringer; Mints: Kretschmer:- silver and tombac, Credit Gold: gold.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-144	1612-9707	1990	tombac	70	140	<5,000	\$30.00
	CM-144a	2612-9505	1990	Ag/999	50	60	<3,500	\$60.00
	CM-144b	3612-9387	1990	Au/916.6	38	33.93	<1,500	\$619.00

Hagana - 70 Years Organization, CM-145



The "Hagana" was an underground Jewish army. Its mission was to defend and protect the Jews and their settlements, as well as to be a military force for the fulfillment of the establishment of a Jewish State. Founded in 1920, the "Hagana" functioned until May 26, 1948, when, with the establishment of the State of Israel, it emerged from the underground. All the "Hagana" forces, the General Staff and its branches, the fighting divisions and the professional corps with their thousands of men, from the Chief of General Staff to the last of the fighters, from that day forth, became members of the Israel Defense Forces.

Obverse: Emblem of the Hagana: a sword and olive-branch. "Hagana 70th Anniversary" in Hebrew and English.

Reverse: Olive branch with leaves. "The Jewish people owes an enormous debt to the Hagana. David Ben-Gurion" and "first Order of the Day to the Israel Defence Forces — May 31, 1948" all in Hebrew.

Edge: "IGCMC" in English and Hebrew, the Menorah and serial number; Designer: Joseph Bass; Mint: The Government Mint, Jerusalem.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-145	4613-0380	1991	CuNi	38.5	26	2,608	\$5.50

1st Tokyo International Coin Convention, CM-146



The Israel Government Coins & Medals Corporation, struck one ounce pure palladium medals for the Taisei Stamp & Coins Co. in Tokyo. The medals commemorate the "Year of the Horse," in honor of the First International Coin Convention in Tokyo. This historic first Israel-Japan medal reflects many years of good relations between the two countries. Each medal came with a Certificate of Authenticity signed by E. Shiloni, Managing Director of the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation. Over 300 of the medals were sold at the convention, the balance was offered to IGCMC subscribers.

Obverse: Profile of a rearing horse, along with the precious metal content "Pd 1 oz, 1990," "1st Tokyo International Coin Convention," in English and in Hebrew in the center.

Reverse: Two gazelles grazing below the snow-packed peak of Mt. Fuji. This bi-national design is completed by branches of delicate cherry blossoms, the convention emblem "TICC," a six-pointed star for Israel and sun representing the flag of Japan.

Edge: All medals are numerically serialized. Designer: ? Mint: ?

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-146		1991	Pd	1 oz.		<500	\$295.00

“Israel Income Tax Commission” 50th Anniversary, CM-147



Income tax was first introduced in Israel in 1941, when the country was still under British Mandatory Rule. The population then numbered one and a half million. In its early stages offices operated in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel-Aviv and the number of tax payers was 25,000. Today, after fifty years of activity, 3,600 workers are employed, dealing with 260,000 self-employed workers, 63,000 companies and 120,000 employers who together deduct taxes from about a million and half paid-employees. Over the years, the Income Tax Commission has become an efficient and important-body in the State of Israel, responsible for about half of the Government's income through the collection of taxes.

Obverse: The Income tax logo, “50th Anniversary of the Income Tax Commission in the Land of Israel” in Hebrew. “1941-1991” in Hebrew and English.

Reverse: “And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel” (Kings 1.5:27) in Hebrew.

Edge: “State of Israel” in Hebrew and English, the Menorah, “Silver .935” and serial number.

Designer: T. G.; Mint: Government Mint, Jerusalem.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-147	2592-7340	1992	Ag/935	34	22	1,292	\$23.00

50th Anniversary of the F.F.I. (LEHI), CM-148



The Lochamei Herut Yisrael (the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), known by the Hebrew abbreviation "Lehi", was founded in 1940 by Avraham Stern (Yair) and other members of the underground organization "Etzel" who disagreed with the Etzel Commander's stand of collaboration with the British regime during World War II. Lehi strove to achieve Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel and to obtain its liberation by armed revolt against the British. It accomplished its goals by daring military operations. On February 12, 1942, British C.I.D. detectives located Yair's hideout in Tel Aviv and shot him dead. With Stern's death, the group suffered a serious setback. In September 1942, Yitzhak Shamir escaped from detention and reconstituted the organization. Many members of the Lehi were killed or detained by the British. With the establishment of the State of Israel, Lehi officially joined the Israel Defense Forces.

Obverse: "50 Years Fighters for the Freedom of Israel F.F.I." and "1940-1990" in Hebrew and English.

Reverse: Portrait of Yair Stern and "Avraham Stern-Yair-Founder of F.F.I 1907-1942" in Hebrew and English.

Edge: "IGCMC" and Menorah. Design: Dov Cohen; Reliefs, Portrait Sculpture and minting: Kretschmer.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-148	1613-1592	1992	tombac	59	98		

"14th Maccabiah", CM-149



This medal was issued to commemorate the 14th Maccabiah Games held in Israel from July 5 - 15, 1993. About 5,000 Jewish participants from around 50 countries took part in the games. The largest Jewish sports event in the world, the Maccabiah Games were established in 1932, 16 years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel.

Obverse: Maccabiah emblem with "14" and "14th Maccabiah Israel 1993" in Hebrew and English.

Reverse: Runners against background of wall of Jerusalem. "I have gathered them to their own land (Ezekiel 39)" in Hebrew and English.

Edge: "State of Israel" and Menorah. Design: Ruth Lubin; Reliefs and minting: Kretschmer.

✓	Kagan #	IGCMC #	Year	Metal	Diam. mm.	Wt. gm.	Final Mintage	Issue Price
	CM-149	1521-1593	1993	tombac	59	98		\$11.00

The Secret Jews of Belmonte by Seth Gitell

The first image a traveler to the Portuguese mountain village of Belmonte spies is a remote almost magical castle perched atop a solitary hill. After the bus winds its way up and around narrow mountain roads and delivers its passengers to the village's main square, visitors sense that isolated Belmonte hides many mysteries.

Among them a secret Belmonte has kept for almost 500 years. A community of Secret Jews who until recently hid in this village since Portugal's King forced the Jews of his land to convert to Christianity or flee.

Belmonte's Jews chose a third path: They became Christian on the outside but remained Jewish within. The Jews of Belmonte are secret no longer. Several years ago the more than 200 members of the community Secret Jews voted to emerge from their shroud of darkness. They have gone through the formal conversion process to return to their faith. Men as old as 65 were circumcised; all participated in the ritual mikvah bath. Now the village's tourism office celebrates them as one of the factions of their town which is also recognized as the birth place of Pedro Alvarez Cabral, discoverer of Brazil.

The pride of the Jews is visible throughout Belmonte, a 1000 person village nestled in the Serra da Estrela mountains. Visitors from the outside are welcomed. The Belmonte Jews want the world to see a miracle that began in 1989: a group of Jews emerging from the shadows to form a vibrant community.

As in days gone by, the home of the once secret Jews is the Rua Juderia, the ancient Jewish section of town. It marks the far boundary of the town and overlooks a valley where farmers grow grapes and raise sheep. The doors of the old stone homes here each bears a cross which Jews hung in place of mezuzot when they converted to Christianity at the end of the 15th century. To the authorities the cross symbolized conversion; to the Jews it identified the occupant as still a Jew.

Today Rua Juderia contains the site of the future synagogue of Belmonte and land has been set aside for a Jewish cemetery. The Jews currently pray in a makeshift synagogue located in a modern apartment building next to the home of the community's first rabbi in 500 years. Shelomo Sebag, a Sephardic rabbi, was sent from Israel.

Each Friday, just prior to Belmonte's magnificent sunset, the congregants make their way down the town's narrow cobblestone streets to their synagogue. They pray loudly and the sound of their proud voices echoes through the narrow streets of the town. The Jews of Belmonte have not only openly embraced their faith they have embraced it with a passion seldom seen in the world of the Jewish Diaspora.

Following the service the congregants, still wearing their *kippot*, wish each other "Shabbat Shalom" and with their eyes glowing, stroll leisurely. One woman greets a visitor with vigor in Portuguese. "For 500 years we remained faithful. We pray with much heart."

While the Jews of Belmonte have maintained their faith for 500 years, the history of Jews in Portugal dates back far longer. One tradition holds that Jews accompanied the seafaring Phoenicians on their voyages to the Iberian Peninsula more than 2800 years ago.

Sephardic folklore tells of Jewish arrival in the area following the Roman destruction of the Temple in the year 70. Following Spain's expulsion of Jews in 1492 many fled to neighboring Portugal. Some found safe haven with the Jews of Belmonte, which lies not far from the Spanish border. Jews had reached Belmonte years earlier following the Moors from Morocco

The end of public Jewish life in Portugal came when King Emanuel I sought to cement a nascent alliance with Spain by marrying Princess Isabella, daughter of King Ferdinand II of Castile and Queen Isabella of Aragon, authors of the Inquisition. The condition for the political union was that Portugal follow Spain's lead and banish Jews from the land.

The Jews of Belmonte still talk of this time far in the past with pain. Those who had the resources fled Portugal settling in Amsterdam, the lands of the Levant and the New World. Those who could not, like the Jews of Belmonte, renounced their faith, took down their mezuzot and became Christians.

During those hard years the Belmonte few remained faithful conceiving themselves as the only Jews left in the world. Working as fabric merchants and purveyors of clothing, these New Christians continued to slaughter their own animals and abstain from the eating of pig or rabbit. Such was their faith that many refused to marry outside of the small Community. This meant that cousins often married cousins. It also meant maintaining religious practices without the guidance of a rabbi and in private.

They celebrated a fast each fall in honor of the Day of Atonement. They observed Shabbat and they baked a form of unleavened bread every spring. During the secret days, the Jews of Belmonte held a fast in March, which held particular importance to them because of its heroine, Esther. The members of the Jewish community felt a special bond with the Queen of Persia, who hid her identity from the king of Persia, but never forgot her faith.

The identification with Esther was particularly acute with the women of Belmonte, who served as the guardians of the Jewish traditions through the years, lighting candles each Friday. While village elders can cite numerous examples of men marrying those "outside the faith", no one can ever remember a women doing so.

Their concealment wasn't discovered until World War I when a mining engineer named Samuel Schwarz stumbled upon a Belmonte

community referred to as Jews by their neighbors.

Meanwhile Portuguese war hero Captain Arturo Caros de Barros Basto from a Marrano family launched a movement calling for Portuguese of Jewish descent to return to their roots. These efforts did not resonate in Belmonte. After years of living in fear and the emergence of the fascist Salazar regime, the Jews of Belmonte continued to remain in hiding. It was the emergence of a strong State of Israel and the Portuguese Revolution in 1974 which enabled the Jews of Belmonte to become Jews to the outside world again.

Today Belmonte serves as a beacon for other Marrano communities within Portugal and has inspired Secret Jews throughout the world to return to Judaism.

The numismatic illustration for this article is a Portuguese banknote featuring a portrait of Garcia De Orta. In his book titled "Judaica on Postage Stamps", John Henry Richter has this to say about De Orta: "He was a son of Jewish parents from Spain who settled in Portugal after their expulsion in 1492. Garcia studied and taught medicine and natural history, but left Portugal for Goa in 1534, as the Inquisition was introduced in his homeland. In the next twenty years he collected an enormous amount of scientific data on the pharmaceutical plants of Asia and much information on local and regional diseases. The results of his horticultural studies were published first in 1563 under the title *Coloquios dos simpler e drogas he cousas medicinais da India*, the first such compendium and an invaluable source of information, which earned him the title of Father of Pharmacognosy.

He died as an observant Catholic, but both his sisters and his own life were the subject of Inquisitional proceedings. His sister Catarina was burned at the stake in 1569 for Judaizing. Garcia de Orta's body was later exhumed and thrown into the River Mondovi."



The expanded version of this article appeared in THE FORWARD.

The ALEPH BETH Page

...Dedicated to the Beginner

by Edward Janis



Q. The Shekels of the First Revolt are dated Year 1 through 5 and are listed from 66 C.E. until year 70 C.E. Did the war take the whole five years parts of the first and last years plus the middle three years or what

G.K., Cleveland, OH

A. We no longer refer to this conflict with the Romans as the First Revolt. This period is now called the Jewish Roman War. We must clarify the time elements of the war. Most historians agree that the start of the war was brought about by the greedy excesses in power by the last of the procurators, Gessius Florus (64-66 C.E.). He sent an order from his headquarters in Caesarea to the "koenim" officials of the Temple in Jerusalem that he is ordering a confiscation of seventeen talents. Josephus (Bk.II, Ch.14, 2-9)tells us of this incident following an extortion of 6 talents for the construction of a synagogue in Caesarea. Roman troops entered Jerusalem with Florus and at his command and orders, plundered designated quarters of the city with much bloodshed and burnouts. On the following day, two additional cohorts of Roman troops arrived in Jerusalem causing new additional killings and other outrages. When the masses in the streets realized that the Romans were making their way to the Temple itself, people began to bombard the Romans with rocks and arrows from the roofs lining the way. This occurred on the 16th & 17th of the Jewish month of Iyyar and is thus considered as the starting date of the war. My 'luach' cannot tell me, but this would be May-June 66 C.E.(approx.)

You are correct in stating that the dates of the coins are 1 through 5. Does this mean that the Jewish Roman war ended in the year 70 C.E.? The war was not over with the fall of Jerusalem. The traitor Jewish King Agrippa and his appeasers, with the assistance of mercenaries of superior military experience were able to defeat Eleazar and his Zealots with heavier and more plentiful arms. However, in the countryside, the Sicarii gained followers and strength. They attacked Masada and captured the giant arsenal stored away by King Herod. With these new arms, they stormed the fortress of Antonia and conquered the upper city in Jerusalem.

Without going into the fortunes of war, it is generally agreed that the Jewish Roman war ended with the downfall of the last survivors of the Roman assault on the top of Masada.

I and others agree this event which took place on Nisson 73 C.E., as the date which was March-April as the end of the war which lasted seven years, even though coins were only minted during its first five years.

25 Mils—The First Coin of Israel

By Shmuel Aviezer

In the early months of the State of Israel, Mr. Eliezer Kaplan, the Finance Minister, took the decision to issue a series of coins bearing the name "pruta" which was derived from biblical sources. Yet, as the scheduled time for receiving these coins from the British mints was not expected to be before May 1949, the Finance Minister deemed it necessary to try and strike one coin in Israel, in a crash-program, to meet the public demand for small denominations.

This was the coin bearing the denomination of 25 Mils. The name "mil" was chosen in order to facilitate its reception by the public in the time when British Mandate coins with the same name were still circulating in the first months of the state.

The motif of the coin was chosen by Dr. Leo Kadman, then Chairman of the Israeli Numismatic Association. It depicts a cluster of grapes hanging from a branch with a small leaf at left, as appeared on an ancient Bar-Kochba period Jewish coin. (132-135 A.D.). The motif apparently symbolized the revival of the Jewish autonomy by recollecting the first testimony on the wealth of the promised land, as witnessed by the spies – the grapes. *"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes.. The place was called the brook Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence"* (Numbers 13: 23, 24) In the annals of mankind, the grapes marked the return to the land.... And so did Noah after the flood receded: *"Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard"* (Genesis 9 : 20).

The coin was designed by Otto Walish. The obverse showed the motif surrounded by a ring of pearls. On the reverse, "25 Mils" denomination was embraced by two stylized olive branches. This is the only coin of Israel that bears the date תש"ח (1948). The first steps to strike the coins were taken in Jerusalem. Representatives of the Ministry of Finance approached the Tchorz firm in Jerusalem to seek a quantity of aluminum for striking Israel's first coin. Eng. A.D. Tchorz, confirmed to me in an interview in June 1991 that his firm supplied the Ministry two tons of aluminum plates left over from the project of building ten stations for the British Police during the Mandate. Mr.Tchorz humorously added that the Treasury has yet to pay him for those two tons! The aluminum was transported to the Zaltzman factory in the German Colony in Jerusalem, which had stamping presses with which they manufactured boxes for Keren Kayemeth LelIsrael.

The dies were moulded by Moshe Moro of Jerusalem. In June 1991, Mrs. Barbara Zaltzman confided to me that, she remembered the project of striking the coins in her husband's factory, but did not recall why the work was stopped after a short while.

Mr. Eliahu Kretchmer, owner of the Jerusalem metal workshop of S.Kretchmer and Sons, told me at that time that the presses of the Zaltzman factory had 60-ton eccentric pressure which did not serve well for striking coins. As the dies were breaking in high recurrence the trials were suspended.

To go forward with the project, Mr. Moshe Neuderfer, chief clerk in the Income Tax Office, was put in charge. He contacted the Michsaf factory in Holon which had presses that manufactured spoons and knives. Mr. Joseph Ganoy, an employee at Michsaf, installed a special time-saving device on the press which enabled automatic striking of the coins.

Mr. Neuderfer described the procedures in an interview with me in June 1991:

"The supply of aluminum by the Tchorz firm was made under special permit issued by the rationing authority as it was not then allowed to sell metals without authorization. The Tchorz brothers were very cooperative and any other information is not true. Also, there was no need to submit the Otto Wallish design of the coin to any specific approving authority. Moshe Klugerman, Michsaf proprietor's brother, carved the dies. The work of striking the coins went at a slow pace, and took about one and half months. Every evening I took the dies home and hid them in the closet. Every morning I brought them back to Michsaf and supervised their being installed on the press. I kept guard all day beside the press. Finished coins were transferred to the vaults of the Anglo-Palestine Bank as deposits for the Finance Ministry."

In the weeks of production 42,650 coins were struck, dated תש"ח (1948). The form and finish of the coin were not up to the desired standard and they were confined to the safes for some time. But the cute shortage of small denominations at the time, and the delay in delivering the prutot coins from the British suppliers, necessitated the introduction of these coins into circulation on April 6, 1949 bearing the obsolete inscription "mil" which has in the meantime been replaced by the term "pruta", yet still used in daily transactions. Although the first of the pruta series, the 50 pruta coin, was put into circulation about a month later (on May 11, 1949), it was decided to continue striking the 25 mil coin, with the date תש"ט (1949). When 650,000 pieces were finished the production stopped, and no more coins of this denomination were ever made.

Note: Mr. Katriel Tchorz died in June 1993 of old age. Mr. Moshe Neuderfer, who last served as General Manager of the Barclays-Discount Bank for more than fifteen years, died in January 1995. The 25 mil coin should constitute a vivid memento of their good deeds.



25 Mils 1949 Die Trial

A uniface trial strike in lead struck to test the 1949 dies. One of the greatest and most interesting rarities in modern Israeli coinage.

25 Mils 5708 (1948)

The first coin of the State of Israel was struck on an improvised press ordinarily used for making cutlery, in a factory in Holon, a Tel Aviv suburb, in the troubled times of 1948. This small aluminum disc stands as the only coin bearing the Hebrew year of the birth of the State, 5708.



25 Mils 5709 (1949)

The symbol of the grapes on the 25 Mils pieces of 1948 and 1949 is one of the oldest in biblical record. The coins were crude compared to Israel coins today, but they made history. They were the first coins of Jewish sovereignty in 1800 years, since the Bar-Kochba War of 132-135 C.E.

25 Mils 5709 (1949)

In 1967, after 20 years, it was noticed that apparently two different dies had been used for the 5709 (1949) issue, an "open-link" design (see top reverse), and a "closed link" design. Other variations include the numeral "2", and the Arabic and Hebrew lettering.



August Belmont & Co. by Edward Schuman

The German-American financier, August Belmont, was born in Alzey, in the province of Rhein-Hessen on December 2, 1816. The family was probably the most important Jewish family in the city of Alzey. Belmont's grandfather, Isaac Simon Belmont, left that city 30,000 florins, 20,000 of which were converted by his four children into a fund called "Belmont Stiftung," which was used for defraying certain congregational expenses, and for providing dowries for poor Jewish girls.

Simon Belmont (1789-1859), the father of August Belmont, was a very prominent member of the Jewish congregation in Alzey. The minutes of the board of trustees of the congregation for a number of years having been signed by him.

There is little doubt that the Belmont family of Alzey is descended from the Belmontes of Amsterdam. Probably some member of the latter family wandered either from Hamburg or Amsterdam, down the Rhine River, ultimately settling in Alzey. When the Jews were forced to take family names by the government, his descendants revived the name which by tradition they knew to have belonged to their family.

August Belmont was educated at Frankfurt-on-the Main and, after serving several years as an apprentice with the Rothschild banking office in Frankfurt, was transferred to the Naples office. He conducted the Rothschild's financial negotiations in Italy, including those with the Vatican. He emigrated to New York (1837) where he became the American representative of the House of Rothschild.

He eventually launched his own, highly successful banking house, August Belmont & Company and built up one of the greatest Jewish banking fortunes in America. The firm continued to represent the Rothschilds well into the 20th century.

After his marriage in 1849 to the beautiful Caroline Perry, daughter of Commodore Matthew Perry, he became a leading figure in New York society. It was at this time that he severed his Jewish ties.

A Democrat and occasional diplomat, he was consul-general for Austria in New York City in 1844. He resigned this position six years later in 1850, protesting against the Vienna regimes brutal treatment of the Hungarian rebels, particularly their leader, Louis Kossuth. In 1853, he was appointed United States chargé d'affaires at The Hague, where he was minister resident from 1855 to 1858. While holding this appointment, he negotiated a very important consular convention and rendered other diplomatic services for which he received a special thanks from the United States State Department. He used his European connections with European bankers and merchants on behalf of the Union during the Civil War, rendering great service to his adopted country. He personally raised and equipped the first German-born regiment in New York.

He was chosen chairman of the Democratic national committee in 1860, serving until 1872 when he resigned. He was a delegate from New York attending every Democratic convention from 1860 to 1884.

August Belmont was widely known as a patron of art and accumulated one of the finest collections of paintings in New York. He was also an avid sportsman and introduced thoroughbred horse racing into the United States. He served as president of the American Jockey Club and did much for thoroughbred racing. Belmont Park, the race track on Long Island is named after him.

August Belmont died in New York City on November 24, 1890. One of his sons, also named August, continued the banking business and is well remembered as the financier of public transportation in the United States. He was able to secure the financing for the building of the Interborough Rapid Transit system (IRT) and the Brooklyn Manhattan Transit (BMT) now part of the New York City subways.

The numismatic illustrations are Belmont checks payable through the Paris and London branches of the Rothschilds.



Who's Who in Israeli Banknotes

by Shmuel Aviezer

The first appearance of an effigy of a known personality on an Israeli banknote was in February, 1969, when the new denomination of 100 pounds (lirot) was introduced into circulation portraying the eminent Zionist leader, Dr. Theodor Herzl. Ten years before, the Public Committee for Planning Banknotes discussed the subject of commemorating distinguished personalities on Israeli banknotes. Many countries adopt this procedure to demonstrate their gratitude and respect to leaders in various fields.

The members of the committee voiced reservations regarding the idea of nominating living personalities for this sort of portrayal. Such a decision could erupt controversy as who is worthy and who is not, arguments that the committee is keen to avoid. The consensus reached, and eventually ratified by the Governor of the Bank of Israel, was that commemoration on banknotes should be restricted to only those prominent personalities who are no more among the living.

Furthermore, the committee agreed that the assembly of personalities to choose from should be eminent in the specific fields, as less controversial as possible, whose life achievements have been rewarded with wide public acceptance. In parallel, the Halachic aspect of showing portraits on banknotes was explored. The findings showed that a flatly-printed picture, as on a banknote, do not constitute a "graven image" which is forbidden under the Second Commandment.

Following this principle, eminent persons in the annals of the Jewish nation, each in his own turf, were earmarked for commemoration. This distinguished group included former Presidents and former Prime Ministers of Israel, literary laureates, prominent philanthropists, and other outstanding personalities.

Here are the particulars of the individuals already portrayed on Israeli banknotes in the various categories, marking the denominations on which they appear, date of first issue of banknote and other detail

PRESIDENTS

Chaim Weizmann (First President)	I.L. 50	(1968)	3rd series
	I.L. 50	(1973)	4th series
	I.S. 5	(1978)	Sheqel "
Izhak Ben-Zvi (Second President)	NIS 100	(1986)	New Sheqel
Zalman Shazar (Third President)	NIS 200	(1991)	New Sheqel

PRIME MINISTERS

David Ben Gurion	I.L. 500	(1975)	4th series
	I.S. 50	(1978)	Sheqel series

Levi Eshkol	I.S. 5,000	(1984)	Sheqel series
	NIS 5	(1985)	New Sheqel series
Golda Meier	I.S. 10000	(1984)	Sheqel series
	NIS 10	(1985)	New Sheqel series
Moshe Sharett	NIS 20	(1987)	New Sheqel series

PROMINENT PERSONALITIES

Theodor Herzl	I.L. 100	(1968)	3rd series
(Zionist Leader)	I.L. 100	(1973)	4th series
	I.S. 10	(1978)	Sheqel series
Rambam (Maimonides)	I.S. 1,000	(1983)	Sheqel series
(Halachic Rabbi)	NIS 1	(1986)	New Sheqel series
Albert Einstein	I.L.	(1968)	3rd series
Henrietta Szold	I.L. 5	(1973)	4th series
Ze'ev Jabotinsky	I.S. 100	(1979)	Sheqel series
(Revisionist Leader)			

LITERARY LAUREATES

Shai Agnon	NIS 50	(1985)	New Sheqel series
(Literature Nobel Prize laureate)			
Chaim Nahman Bialik	I.L. 10	(1968)	3rd series
(National Poet)			

PHILANTHROPISTS

Moshe Montefiore	I.L. 10	(1973)	4th series
	I.S. 1	(1978)	Sheqel series
Baron Edmond de Rothschild	I.S. 500	(1982)	Sheqel series

The Bank of Israel Currency Department is presently preparing the basic designs for another three banknotes. It has been the Bank's policy for long to be ready with a few designs of banknotes, without prior decision on the denomination or date of issue; this, in order to save the precious time needed to complete the graphic elements of the banknote, especially the portrait.

The Planning Committee for Banknotes, currently chaired by the Supreme Justice Mr. Moshe Landau, has already chosen the three personalities who will adorn these future banknotes. They are Menahem Ussishkin, prominent Zionist leader; Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the reviver of the modern Hebrew language, who created thousands of words and idioms in Hebrew; Menahem Begin, the late Prime Minister of Israel.

Due to the prevailing mild inflation in Israel, it is unlikely that a higher denomination than the NIS 200, now in circulation, will be issued in the foreseeable future. A potential NIS 500 note, about \$167 in the current rate of exchange and is obviously quite a high sum in a banknote. The three above mentioned designs for banknotes are bound to be kept in reserve, to be utilized when the need arises.

Genocide as German Government Policy Before the Holocaust

by Peter S. Horvitz

There are those who would prefer to see the Holocaust as a singular and unrepresentative aberration in modern German history. Hitler's government, according to such, was totally unlike all that came before and all that came after. But official policies promulgating genocide did not begin in Germany with the rise of the Nazis. Just thirty years earlier, between 1904 and 1906, Germany's Second Reich launched and carried out a systematic attempt to wipe out the Herero people of Southwest Africa. This attempt was quite successful with about 81 percent of the Herero being killed, with much of the remainder fleeing to nearby Bechuanaland. When attempts were later made by the survivors to return to their homeland, they were intercepted and executed.

The Herero (whose name means "the men of joy" in their own language, a Bantu dialect) were a Christianized group of cattle herders living in the central region of South-West Africa, present day Namibia.

When the German colony of Southwest Africa was first declared by Bismark, in 1885, the Herero were cooperative with the German authorities. In October, 1885, the Herero king, Maherero, signed a treaty with the German agent H. E. Goering, which guaranteed German protection of the Herero people. But the Nama, a neighboring people, were less trusting of German good will. Their king, Hendrik Witbooi, predicted to the king of the Herero that, "In the end you will have bitter remorse for this handing of your land and sovereignty over to the hands of white people.....This giving of yourself into the hands of the whites will become a burden as if you were carrying the sun on your back."

After the death of Maherero, in 1890, his son, Samuel Maherero, renounced the German treaty. Attempts were made to find an ally in the British, but by now the British government had accepted the sovereignty of the Germans over the region. The new German chancellor, Georg von Caprivi, declared that German control would be maintained "at all costs."

At first the German efforts met with mixed success. But the new governor, Theodor Leutwein (1898-1905), found a cheap and efficient means of suppressing the native populations, by playing off one native group against the other. There were, at this point, agitation for a German "war of extermination" against the native populations. Leutwein, however, resisted these agitations as he felt a more efficient, if not more humane, method was the confiscation of the natives' cattle, their source of livelihood, and to force them to seek employment as virtual slave labor on the large estates that wealthy Germans were setting up on traditional native lands.

The Herero were particularly hard hit by a combination of cattle seizures, land seizures, and the abolishment of credit to natives. This last measure led to 106,000 claims against the Herero in 1903-4. Herero people were seized at gunpoint and thrown in prison. King Samuel Maherero, taking advantage of a German expedition in the South, declared a revolt against his oppressors.

The revolt caught Leutwein unprepared. Troop reinforcements were rushed from Germany under the command of Lieutenant-General Lothar von Trotha. At the height of the campaign, some 15,000 German soldiers would be sent to Southwest Africa. Some 1000 of these would die and many more would be wounded.

A major battle was engaged on August 11, 1904 and the Herero were soundly defeated. But the German government was not content with mere victory. Von Trotha issued the following order of 1904: "The Herero nation must now leave the country...Within the German frontier every Herero, with or without a rifle, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will not take over any more women and children, but I will either drive them back to your people or have them fired on. These are my words to the nation of the Hereros."

Von Trotha drove the survivors towards the Kalahari Desert. Units were placed at all waterholes to shoot at any attempt to find relief. Von Trotha ordered his troops, "The closing of the eastern frontier of the colony and the exercise of terror against every Herero who is sighted will remain the policy so long as I am here. The nation (of the Herero) must disappear. If not through shooting, then in this way."

But some of the Herero refused to be driven into the waste. These were rounded up and placed in special camps. These camps are described in the German records as "Concentration Camps." Of the 15,000 Herero gathered in the concentration camps in 1904, more than 45 percent were dead by 1907.

When the German forces officially ended their war against the Herero in 1907, only 13,130 of the more than 80,000 Herero were left alive in the German territory; 2000 more, including King Samuel Maherero, were in exile in Bechuanaland, modern-day Botswana. The few Herero that survived were refused any territorial rights in their native land until after the end of German rule, during the First World War.

To reward the German troops who participated in the massacre of the Herero (as well as for those who participated in a contemporary and similar, but smaller-scaled, campaign against the Nama), a special medal was issued by the German government of Kaiser Wilhelm II

This medal issued in 1907, was struck in iron and measures 32mm. It also has a pointed, holed extension at the top to attach the ribbon. The obverse shows a Wagnerian Valkyrie's head facing left, in an elaborate helmet with bird's head crest and wings. The legend is SÜDWEST AFRIKA 1904-06

Under the cut of the Valkyrie's shoulder is the signature of the medallist, D. SCHULTZ. The reverse shows the monogram of Kaiser Wilhelm II, above which is the imperial crown and beneath which is a branch of bay, a symbol of victory. The German legend translates as "For Merit in the Expedition." The ribbon for this medal is 35 millimeters wide. It has a black vertical stripe on each edge. These flank white stripes, which in turn flank a central panel. The central panel consists of a series of horizontal red and white stripes.

It's quite possible that a participant in the Herero War may have still been active in the German army of the Third Reich. This medal was still legally worn on uniform in Germany during the period of the Holocaust.



THE RIBBON



Südwesafrika-Denkmünze

MIKE, YOU ARE NOT MY GREAT-GRAND DADDY!

by George Prager

"Philadelphia, in 1776 was the second largest city in the British Empire. In 1792, it was the capital of the United States and unrivaled in America in size and splendor. The first Congress of the United States, meeting at New York in 1790 after selection the District of Columbia as the permanent capital, decided that the seat of government for the next ten years should be in Philadelphia."

Proud Pennsylvania built a home for President Washington in Philadelphia, and when the cornerstone was laid, it bore these words: "for the accommodation of the President of the United States... May 10, 1792, when the State of Pennsylvania was out of debt."

1792 was a year of political stability and ever increasing material well being that produced a merchant elite out of the city's population of 42,520. The Insurance Company of North America was founded at meetings Nov. 3, 12, and 19 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia by distinguished citizens, high ranking ex-army officers, bankers and wealthy merchants. Within eleven days 40,000 shares of the company were sold at \$10- a share. The company was organized Dec. 12, 1792.

Among the founders and first directors of I.N.A. was Michael Prager (1740-1793). He was an Irish immigrant merchant and a staunch supporter of Washington. His portrait which is in the North America's collection shows him wearing on his hat the Red, White and Blue cockade of the Federalist Party.

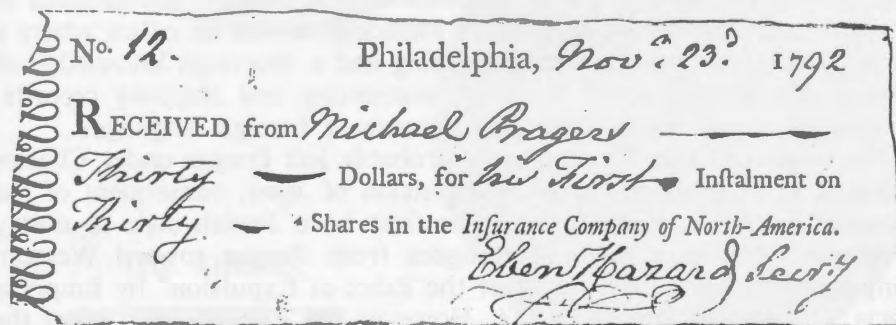
Michael Prager and his brother Marc had their counting house at 216 South Front Street in Philadelphia. Records indicate that Prager died during the Yellow Fever epidemic which plagued Philadelphia in 1793. A counting house of 1792 in Philadelphia was an office where a person received comprehensive training and a thorough knowledge of trade, trade routes, river systems, accounting and shipping records, warehousing, and an intimate acquaintance of foreign languages.

My branch of the Prager family probably left Prague under Charles IV reign as a result of the 1724 expulsion of Jews, consequent of the "Familial Decree", which forbade the first born Jewish male to marry in Prague. The next wave of refugees from Prague toward Western Hungary occurred as the result of the "Edict of Expulsion" by Empress Maria Theresa on Dec. 18, 1744. However the exit of Jews from the Prague ghetto was delayed by the severity of the winter weather till March 31, 1745. Many of these refugees were resettled by Hungarian noblemen Prince Eszterhazy and Grof Batthanyi on their extensive land holdings in Western Hungary in seven little towns and villages they owned near the Austrian border. The largest community resided in Eisenstadt (Burgenland, Austria). The Prager families are recorded in Kitse (Kopcseny), a few kilometers away. These noblemen knew what they were doing by protecting and using the Jews to their advantage.

There are records in the National Archives in Budapest, that Jacob Prager lived in Kitse in 1720 and had a 14 year old son and a daughter. Another Jacob Prager is registered in Kitse in 1760 with an 8 year old son and 5 year old daughter. Records exist 1798-1846 in Kitse for the following names: Mojzes Prager, Marcus P., Simon P., Georgius Prager. The first direct ancestors appear in Kiskunhalas (Central Hungary). Prager Abel (1768-), Jewish justice head of the congregation and his brother Samuel (1776-) and Prager Marton, all came from Kitse. According to the census of 1818, Prager Abel, 50 years old arrived in 1797 at Kiskunhalas from Kitse with his wife and 3 children. Prager Samuel, 42 years old arrived with his brother in the same year as a batchelor, now has a wife and 4 children. Of interest to note both brothers had one son each named Jehuda Joseph (Sr. & Jr.). This name came down through generations in the family. I am not sure whether Abel or Samuel was the originator of our branch of Pragers, but my hunch is it was Samuel. My great-grandfather was Jehuda Joseph (Jr.) 1815-1884 and among his nine children was my grandfather, Zsigmond (1852-1939) and his younger brother, Samuel (1861-1944). According to Ashkenazi custom, a grandchild is named after a deceased grandparent, whether male or female. My father was also named Jehuda Joseph (1886-1973) after his grandfather. My son, Gad Joseph carries on this tradition.

The Prager family left Prague in the early 18th century; dispersed in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and certainly a branch went west to England and Ireland and further emigrated to America.

But Michael Prager, however illustrious and a distinguished person you might have been - you were not my great-great grand daddy after all - just possibly a distant branch on the family tree.



The numismatic illustration, courtesy of CIGNA Archives, is receipt #12 showing that Michael Prager paid \$30 as his "first installment" on thirty shares in the Insurance Company of North America. References: The American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH., John E. Diemand, President of I.N.A.'s address in 1953 in Philadelphia, The Jewish Encyclopedia, Budapest Hungarian National Archives and records of the orthodox Jewish congregation, Kiskunhalas..

CLUB



BULLETIN

DONNA J. SIMS N.L.G.

Editor

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INS OF LONG ISLAND - Exhibit topics for March were Purim, Passover and new acquisitions. Discussion and plans for future meetings were also held. Exhibit topics for April were Israel Independence, Exiles, Ben Gurion and new acquisitions. A special program entitled "The Making of a Dishonest Dollar" was not only a surprise but educational.

ISRAEL COIN CLUB OF LOS ANGELES - An AINA produced slide program entitled "Similarities between Israel's Stamps and Coins" was featured at the April meeting. It was announced that member Sally Marx was the recent honored recipient of an award from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society as 1995 Peer Counselor.

ISRAEL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY OF LOS ANGELES - "Herod the Great and His Coins" was the program topic at the March meeting by Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald. (I would like to mention here that Dr. Fitzgerald is currently serving as General Chairman of the upcoming ANA Convention in Anaheim, California this coming August). Member David Gursky spoke on "My Experience at an Archeological Dig in Israel" at the April meeting. Photographs and a few relics helped to enhance his personal experience as a dig participant. Another special speaker will be featured at the May meeting. Member Alex Shagin will speak on "Freelance Designing." Alex was recently honored with more awards. The ANA Medal of Merit and the prestigious Saltus Award from the ANS were presented to him recently, honoring his achievements in the art of design and sculpture. Also mentioned in the May newsletter was how successful the club's, in conjunction with the Los Angeles Coin Club, two case Rare Coin Exhibit has been. One case features U.S. material and the other Israel.


INS OF MASSACHUSETTS - It was decided at the March meeting that the club would donate all of its past copies of the Shekel to the Hebrew College Library in memory of INSM's past president, Eli Grad. Any remaining items will be donated to the Jewish Historical Society. Other items of discussion were the various activities happening in Israel, problems with cleaning and storing coins, and show and tell. No meeting was held in April due to the Passover holidays. However, included with the April newsletter was a letter of thanks from the Hebrew College Library thanking the club for its generous donation of the Shekel and other items.

INS OF MICHIGAN - Special guest speaker at the March meeting was Manny Selfus, "U.S. Pattern Coins and the Motto 'In God We Trust'" his topic. Kay Briggs spoke on "Volume 1 Number 1" at the April meeting. If you are unable to understand this title, it relates to Bob Briggs' collection of Volume 1 Number 1 magazines, manuscripts and newspapers. It was decided that the annual Dinner will be held June 27 at the Morels Bistro, to celebrate INSM's 25th/26th Anniversary.

INS OF NEW YORK - Exhibit topics for April were: Modern, cardboard, folder and holder presentation sets; Ancient, Judea Capta and Ceasaria; Paper, 1958 5 & 10 pounds; Commem, H. Szold and Heroism; and Medals, Israel Liberata. For May: Modern, 16 & 18 different trade coins; Ancient, Bar Kochba coins; Paper 1958 50 pounds & 1968 100 pounds; Commem, 1962 No. Africa Candelabra, and Medal, State music medals, coin medal of Jerusalem and others with a panorama.

WESTCHESTER ISRAEL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY - Study topic at the April meeting was the reign of the Hashmonean Dynasty. The May meeting had study of the reigns of Herod the Great and his son Archelaus.

THOUGHTS - Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards (Soren Kierkegaard). The only difference between a stumbling block and a stepping stone is the way you use it (Anonymous).

COMMENTS FROM DJS - This should find you well into the summer and hopefully you have had a safe and great vacation or have one planned. Plans are in the works for an AINA day at the ANA Convention on Thursday, August 17 in Anaheim. Hope many are able to attend. Remember, your club needs your attendance and participation. Be well, be happy. 

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